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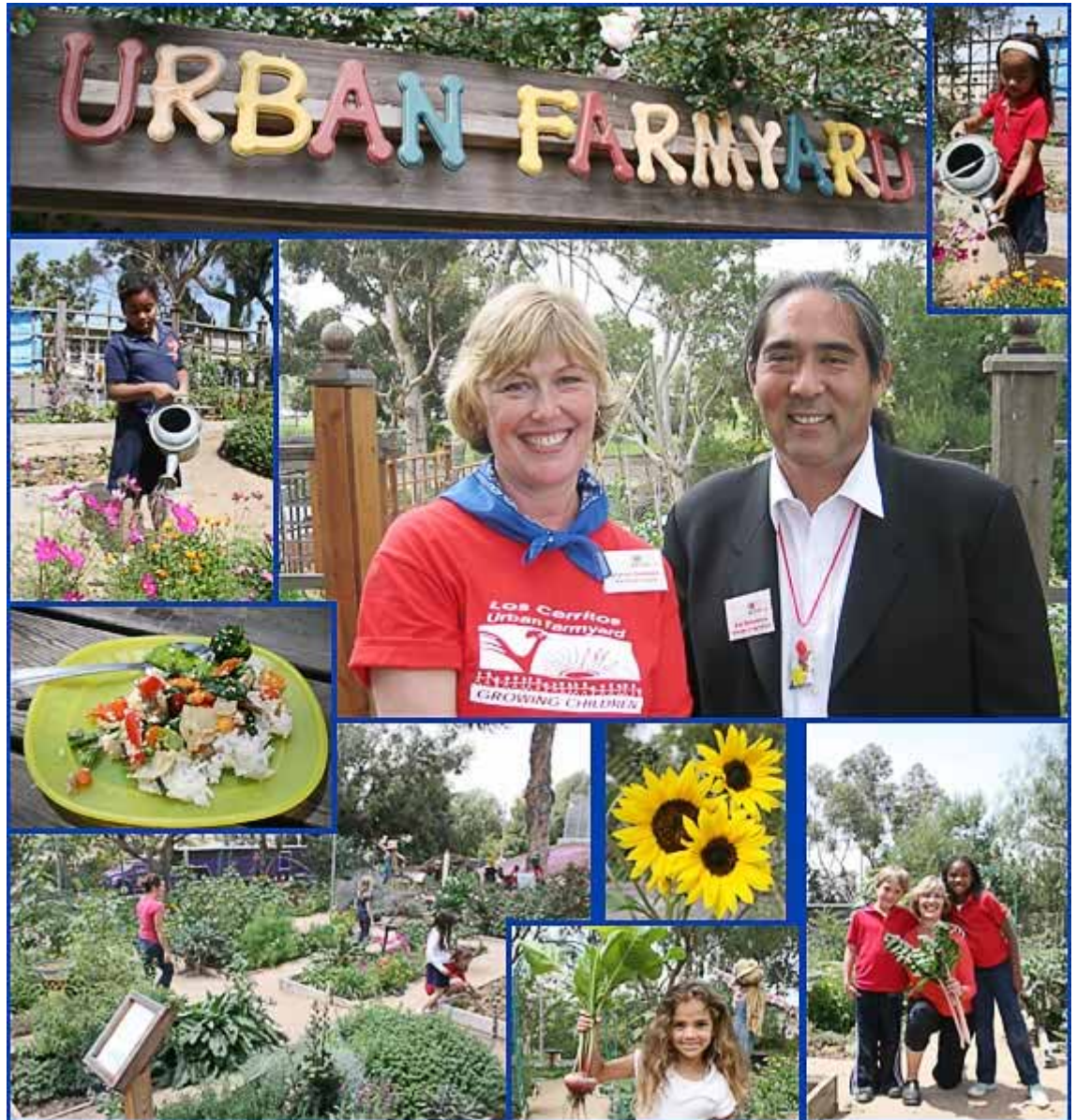
Monday, July 16, 2007

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(Photos: J. Henderson, CDFA; J. Morris, California Farm Bureau Federation)

## "There's a school in every garden," and I'm happy to report about an award-winner in one of them, too!

Last year I was delighted to visit the beautiful "urban farmyard" developed and maintained in Long Beach at [Los Cerritos Elementary School](#) by 2nd grade teacher **Dianne Swanson** and her students. This year I am very happy to report that Dianne has been named **Outstanding Teacher of the Year for 2007** by the [California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom](#). Dianne is a strong promoter of agriculture education and she has successfully integrated agriculture into an urban Long Beach primary school. Too often urban school students are not aware of where their food comes from or how it's grown. Using school gardens as a tool, visionary educators such as Dianne educate children about agriculture, one of the state's most vital industries. **Congratulations Dianne!**

CDFA and several other state agencies, including the [Department of Education](#), have partnered with private companies, educational institutions and nonprofit organizations, to create the California School Garden Network ([CSGN](#)). This is a one-stop-shop for teachers and educators who seek information to establish, fund and maintain school gardens. Many school garden resources are available to California teachers. CSGN is the first organization to consolidate them all in one location, giving instructors easy access to the tools they need to grow and sustain successful school gardens.

For years I've felt strongly that many different lessons, not just those centered around math and science, can be taught in any school during agricultural activities. Student participation in school gardens also promotes agricultural awareness, good nutrition, physical activity, social development and community involvement. In these gardens children witness the fundamental processes of plant and animal life cycles and reap the rewards of honest effort.

I'm pleased to report that nearly 4,300 schools have applied this year for school garden "seed" grants administered through the California Department of Education's (CDE) [Instructional School Garden Program](#). California public schools, county offices of education, and direct-funded charter schools can use the grant funds to create, maintain, and expand instructional school gardens that serve as a learning laboratory to support academic instruction. Check the CDE website this fall for the availability of additional school garden grants.

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As always, thank you for your support. Feel free to contact my office with any questions or concerns.

### **A.G. Kawamura**

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